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THE
Divinity of the Scriptures,
FROM
Reason & external Circumstances.

A $\frac{693.e.8.}{2}$
SERMON

Preach'd at
Trinity - Church in New-York,
The second Sunday after *Trinity*, 1728.

BY *K*
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of *Elizabeth-City* in the Parish of *Hampton*,
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A SERMON, &c.

2 Tim. III. 16. first clause of the Verse.

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.

OF all Truths, which we are obliged to believe, next to the Being of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, the *Divinity of the Scriptures* ought to be most deeply imprest. This connects Reason and Revelation, Faith and Morality, the sentiments of unassisted Nature, and those supernatural Ones of *Christianity*. The Apostle's design in these two *Episcopal Letters* to *Timothy*, whom he ordained and left Bishop at *Ephesus*, the Metropolis of *Asia*, is to teach him, how to demean himself in that sacred Office: In them we have a collection of *Apostolical Canons & Injunctions*, necessary to be observ'd by all Bishops and other Pastors of the Church: In them we have directions both for the guidance of themselves, and the Government of the Flock committed to their care. In this Chapter he forewarns them of dangerous men, of the worst Qualities; and in the 14th verse exhorts him to continue in these things he had learned and was assured of, seeing he was one of those to whom the

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The Divinity of the Scriptures.

sacred Charge was committed, being set a part for that sacred Office; with these Men, of whom he was fore-warned, he was not to associate, for to them was never committed this *sacred Depositum*; 'Tis not therefore every one who can and doth harangue an Auditory out of a Pulpit, that has Power so to do, but only the *Timothy's* of Christ, those who are called of God, as was *Aaron*, who derive their Authority from Christ & his Apostles by a continued Succession of *Bishops, Priests and Deacons*, according to that of *St. Ignatius*, (a) who speaking of the three Orders, says, *Without these 'tis not denominated a Church*. As a further Encomium of these sacred Records, he adds, *vers. 16.* which is my Text, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.*

Scripture is a general Term for any Writing whatsoever, but the Qualities in this and the foregoing *vers.* restrict it to the Old and New Testament, especially the Old *St. Paul* had a view to here, and in which *Timothy*, from his Childhood, was conversant, not excluding the Gospels, and some Writings of his own, which at that time were published. The Men who wrote them were Men divinely inspired, who had the conduct and power of Gods holy Spirit in doing it. Perhaps it will appear needless to Remark, that the express Citations of *Scripture* may have weight with those who are already perswaded of their *Divine Original*, and may be of some use to the Vulgar, where

(a) *Choris touton Ekklesia en Kaleitais*

where Faith is, for the most part, implicit, acquiescing in the Scriptures as the *Word of God*, thro' a lively sentiment & impression of the excellency of the Gospels Precepts, and Gods blessing upon an *honest Intention*, which is the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes in Religion. Tho' the most of Mankind are not capable to be Persuaded by an accurate Disquisition of the whole matter, yet for one who has Leisure and Ability to consider the abstracted Evidences of Religion, to satisfy himself in a dull Belief of the Religion in which he was educated, not to divest himself of all Prejudices, and by a strict scrutizing to examine, at least, the most fam'd Professions, and to hold to that which appears best, is not only *Unphilosophical*, but proves, that very little Candor, Ingenuity or Generosity is lodg'd in their Breasts; nay further, this might justify any *Mahometan* to adhere to that Religion taught them by their Parents. It must not be expected then, that I should prove the *Divinity of our sacred Records* by expresse Texts of Scripture, which would be a scandalous arguing in a Circle. In order then to confirm the Belief of some, and to convince those who don't believe the Divinity of the Scriptures, I shall confine my self to Moral and Collateral Evidences, from *Reason and Eternal Circumstances*. We may bless God that *We* have a Religion which needs not be afraid to stand at the Bar of *Reason*, and submit the Cause to the most Impartial Decision.

Well then, the *Being and Attributes of God, the Immortality*

Immortality of our Souls, a future State of Rewards and Punishments; Prophecies and Miracles; the Ability and Integrity of the Pen-men; the absence of all imaginable Signs of Imposture, Natural, Moral and Mysterious Truths contain'd in the Scriptures; the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and in fine, the Style, Harmony and Scope of the whole. All these conspire to prove the Divine Original, and the Inspiration of the Pen-men. We shall a little touch on each of these Heads, and after one great Objection answer'd, conclude with an Inference from the whole.

That there is a *Self-existent Independent Principle, or a GOD*, is very clear, if not Self-evident Truth; for if there has not been an Eternal and necessary Cause, nothing could have existed now; an Infinite Succession of Co-eternal Infinite Causes may be reduced to this Absurdity; That it had been equally possible these Causes should have existed or not, Chance then determin'd their Existence, that is, something was produced by Nothing, than which nothing more Absurd. That *Matter* is not Self-existent, is very clear; for what is so, must necessarily be in all Times and Places. But *Bodies* are of different specific Gravities; therefore in places of equal Dimensions there may be more or less *Matter*, according to the different specific Gravities of Bodies placed in them; therefore there is a Vacuity: *Matter* is not in all Places, is not Necessary and Self-existent. We must then acknowledge a *Self-existent Spirit*, by whom all things exist, and that is the Idea we have

have of God, from which all his Attributes are easily deducible ; likewise, from these, and the natural Desires of the humane Soul (for God and Nature do nothing in vain) its Immortality, and a state of future Rewards and Punishments may be inferr'd. Now from this we may see, that there is an Eternal Fitness, several Moral Relations, especially, 'twixt the *Creator* and *Intelligent Creatures*, that these should be observ'd ; yet they are plainly neglected and violated : And tho' some of the wiser *Heathens* saw and taught them, yet they wanted Authority to inculcate them ; so that *Socrates* acknowledges the impossibility of this, without divine Assistance supernaturally to be revealed ; Plainly, then a divine Revelation was wanted, and no other than the *Christian* has any just ground, any tolerable Pretence to be thought this divine Revelation, so worthy of God, so perfective of the Nature of Man, and discovering this Divine Person, of whom the *Heathens* had but a dim objective sight. Therefore if *Christianity* be not true, there is no other Revelation of the Will of God at all. Now 'tis unreasonable to imagine, and far more so to say, God would neglect his Creatures so far, as not to give them that which was so necessary in it self, and so earnestly expected ; *Therefore the Scriptures are the Word of God, and divinely inspired.* Here Life and Immortality are brought to light, and the greatest Motives to an holy Life, from the Representation of a Future State ; the Worm which never dyes, Life in Death, Perpetual Death

Death without ever expiring : On the other hand those Eternal Joys, large as our Desires, and lasting as our Souls ; These work on the Principles of our Hopes and Fears, the Springs of Humane Actions, in the most powerful manner, to enforce the Obligation of the Eternal Law of Righteousness, the Revelation of them ; therefore must be acknowledged to be *Divine*.

Next, We shall speak of the *Prophecies* ; to which we ought to take particular Notice ; these shining as Lights in a dark place. Now there is not one Circumstance in our Saviour's Life, but what has been predicted in the Old Testament ; The great Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah* seems rather to write an Historical Relation of matters before hand transacted, than fore-tell things that were to come. *Daniel* is likewise very distinct in his Prophecies : What wonderful Fore-sight had he of the Revolutions of the four great Governments, all of them subservient to the Propagation of the Gospel, which will be manifest to any who considers how Circumstances unfolded themselves by degrees, till the time of the Incarnation. But of all, the most Remarkable is that of the *Seventy Weeks*, *Dan. ix. 24 v.* These Weeks being Weeks of Years, 7 times 70 make 490 years, and according to *Predeaux* these commenced at the 7th year of *Artaxerxes*, which coincides with the 458th year before the vulgar *Christian Era*. We know, and we have the Confession of all the *Heathen Writers*, That all the Particulars

Particulars mentioned in the *Text* were verified by a very exact Completion at the time of our *Saviour's Death*. Now add the 32 years of our *Saviour's Life* to the 458, you have 490 years, or the LXX Prophetical Weeks: The Scriptures have general and particular Promises intermixt: The particular Ones are in consideration of the great *Prophecies* concerning *Christ*; they being blended the one with the other, was the reason why they were so much the more Remarkable, and taken Notice of, and not without Fruit. 'Tis true, the *Jews* expecting a Temporal Prince, rejected *Jesus* as their *Messias*; but this same, in the divine Providence, is a further Proof of the Matter. Our Records of Proof, and of their Condemnation, are kept by themselves, so that there can be no Collusion. The carnal *Jews* neither understood the Grandeur nor the Lowliness of the *Messias* predicted in their own *Prophecies*; they mistook him in his Greatness, as how *Jesus* could be the *Messias*, the Son of *David*, when he says, He was before *Abraham*: They did not believe him so great as to be from Eternity: They mistook him likewise in his Humiliation and Death: The *Messias*, say they, remains forever, but this Person says, he will depart or dye: But this is a plain fulfilling of the *Prophecies*, even their denying of him; The Stone which the Builders did reject, the same is become the Head of the Corner, a Rock of Scumbling, and a Stone of Offence to the carnal *Jews*, but to the Wise and Discerning Christians, the Power

and Wisdom of God unto Salvation: The Scepter's departing from Judah at this very time (for Herod was an Idumean by Descent) is a further Confirmation that Christ was the *Shile* to come. The Accomplishment of our Saviour's Prediction concerning the Ruin of *Jerusalem*, by the Desolation of Abomination; the Misery and Dispersion of the *Jews* to this very day, add to the Evidence. So that *Prophecies* in general, and the *Circumstances* of the *Jews* in particular, are forever a Permanent standing Miracle in Confirmation of *Christianity*; and therefore *The Scriptures are Divinely Inspired*.

Let us next consider the *MIRACLES* of the Old and New Testaments; *The Deluge* and *Noah* preserved; and we see the *Heathens* have Gleanings of this in several of their Writings, as also a great deal of the *Pentateuch* or five Books of *Moses*: *The Tower of Babel*, and the *Confusion of Languages*: *Plagues* brought upon a whole Kingdom, the *Israhelites* Preserved: *Moses's* Rod turn'd into a Serpent, and devouring those of the *Adagians*; and by a stroke of it the *Red Sea* made to stand as a Firm Wall, till the *Israhelites* passed as upon Dry Land, and Devouring the Pursuing Host of the *Egyptians*: The *Jews* Fed in the *Wilderness* with *Manna* for Forty years; *Drink* afforded them from the Flinty Rock; *Nations* Expelled before them; *GOD* himself their General, their Enemies Destroyed by *Angels*; Strong Walls Overthrown by the blowing of Horns,
(most

(most unlikely means in themselves) yet the People constantly Rebelling against God, and as often Punished: Thousands swept away with the *Pestilence* in one Day. Now the *Jews* were the most blind-folded People in the World, or else these things were true; for at whatsoever time the *Imposture* should begin to be fram'd, certainly it might be Disclaimed. Again, in the the New-Testament, all manner of *Disorders Cured* by a Word; by a Touch *Total Privations Recovered*: The *Dead Quickened* and brought to *Life*; with an infinite Number more such by Christ and his Apostles. Now these *Miracles* were not done in a Clandestine manner; they were glaring Incontestible *Miracles*, for the benefit of Mankind, frequently repeated, bearing the Test of Light, and the warrant of Search, yet never contradicted by the *Jews*: And since they would, had it been in their Power, either God has given no Marks to distinguish Real from Counterfeit *Miracles* (which is absurd) or these are genuine, and consequently *The Scripture is by Divine Inspiration.*

Again If we consider the *Ability* and *Integrity* of the *Pen-men*, the *Divine Origine* of the *Scriptures* will be further confirmed: 'Tis certain, if *Moses* would have imposed upon the *Jews*, by writing that in their Law, which every one perused, and which, if False, every one might confute; nay, he could have been contuted, had he err'd in the *History of the Creation*; for the Tradition of it must needs be very recent in their Memories;

Few Generations pass'd them who saw *Lamach*, who saw *Adam*, at least *Abraham*, he saw *Jacob*, who saw these who saw *Moses*; therefore the *History of the Creation and Deluge* must needs be true. Were he resolved to cheat, he would make the Number of years and Generations, from the commencement of the World, greater, and the Ages of man, by far shorter. Can we think it possible, that any one could perswade Man, living in this Age, or even Country, that such great matters were transacted, as are related by *Moses*, in the Reigns of King *James* the first, and Queen *Elizabeth*? And if such Matters had been done, would not a Tradition be very lively and current, even among the *Vulgar*? Now there are as many Generations 'twixt us and King *James* the first, as there were 'twixt *Moses* and *Adam*, and the Advantage is plainly on their side, when they were of so long Lives, which renders the Tradition of a greater Certainty: And if no such great Matters had been, if any one should begin to patch up a Story, and write it in their Laws, would not they immediately destroy the *Impostor*, as a publick Pest? That such and such *Prophets* liv'd in different Ages, will be easily allow'd, as it will not be doubted there were such People as *Homer*, *Horace*, *Alexander* the great, or *Cesar*. It will not be deny'd that these *Prophets* led retired Lives, and very much contemn'd the Allurements of the World, and that they told a great many things, which to a Tittle were fulfilled: Sure then they had some Communication with

with the *Almighty*, who only knows what Time will produce. It will be acknowledged, that the *Apostles*, for the most part, were illeterate Fisher-men, that in Preaching the Gospel they could not have any Prospect of Worldly Advantage: On the contrary, the Power, Malice and Learning of the World against them, and the most exquisite Torments, could be invented, inflicted upon them; and though they Wise and Sober Men, knew all this would be their Lot, yet still they went on with their Work; therefore of necessity we must suppose, they were able to tell the Truth, being Ear and Eye Witnesses of what they taught, so they had Integrity to tell nothing else; but had their Commission from *Jesus Christ*; and the Power of *Miracles* to confirm their Authority withal, whereby the greatest part of the *Then* known World, was converted to *Christianity*. And as *Lactantius*, the Christian *Cicero*, said, *Show me the most Barbarous and Savage Man in the World, let him once become a Christian, and he shall be chang'd into the most Humane and Vertuous, and that not by the flashes of Enthusiasm, but by a permanant abiding Principle.* Therefore by the *Fidelity* and *Integrity* of the sacred *Pen-men*, with the *Effects* of their Doctrine, we must necessarily believe, the *Christian Religion* to be of *Divine Institution*.

Proceed we now to show, That none of all the *Imaginable Marks of Imposture* can be charged on *Christianity*. The Marks are, That the end of the
Imposture

Imposture must be some *carnal Interest*, *Ambitions*, *Avarice* or *Lust*; None but Wicked Men, i. e. of Immoral Lives and Debauch'd Principles, for the Promoters of it; That this must appear in the very contexture of the Work itself; that it can never be so fram'd but that it will contain some Falsities in it, which will discoover all the rest; That first, it must be propagated with Craft and Fraud; again, when entrusted with many Conspirators, it can never be long conceal'd; and lastly, it can never be establish'd, except it be back'd with Force and Violence. Now none of these are charged or can be on *Christianity*: the very reverse obtain'd. *Piety* and *Virtue* are the end. Good honest Men the Propagators; no Fraud us'd, no Falsity taught, but all *Truth* and *plain Dealing*, and no power on Earth to back, but all to oppose it; We must acknowledge a far greater Support, that of Heaven. *Therefore the Scriptures are the Word of God.*

I next proceed to those co-lateral Evidences from Natural, Moral and Mysterious Truths contain'd in the Scriptures, which shew, of necessity, that the Writers must have been Inspir'd.

I begin, first, with some Truths relating to *Natural Philosophy*. The first Text I shall adduce is that in the 139 Psalm, 14. v. *I will Praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Marvelous are thy Works, and that my Soul knows right well.* Now, this at first sight seems to some, *Hyperbolical*,
when

when they took Notice only of the outward structure of Man, but the Inspired Psalmist has probably in view some late discoveries in *Anatomy*, the wonderful Circulation of the *Blood* thro' the *Veins* and *Arteries*, to and from the *Heart*, the Passage of the *Chyle*, with its several *little Valves*, of which, if the least be stop'd, Mans Life is at an end: The wonderful Force of the *Muscles*, the curious Contexture of the *Eye*, by which the Laws of *Opticks* in *Refraction* are nicely observed; probably, then it was the Author of Nature who knew the Structure of Man, who induc'd the Psalmist to express himself, *How fearfully and wonderfully am I made*, &c. tho' these Wonders were not discovered till latter Ages. We are said to be in our Parents Loins: now this appears Incredible to some, but *Anatomists* found that the *Semen* is lodged there for a considerable time before it is prepared in the *Seminal Vessels*. When I consider the Heavens, which thy Fingers fram'd, then what is Man? Now late discoveries give a wonderful force to this Argument, for the *New System* supposes the *Fixt Stars* to be so many *Solar Systems*, like ours, with their *Planets* revolving round their respective Centers, probably Inhabited by various Creatures. Sure this enlarges the mind, and makes it look down upon the trifling amusements of this World, yet at the same time humbles Man with the Psalmist, *when I look up*, &c. *then, what is Man?* And while our Bodies are thus swallow'd up in the Immensity of surrounding matter, must not our Souls be employed in the

Contemplation

Contemplation of the Praises of our Creator! Again, *Exod. xxiii. 20 v. He took the Calf which the Israelites had made of Gold, and burnt it with Fire, and stamp'd it and ground it very small into Powder.* The *Diests* in the beginning of the last Age argued much upon this, that Gold could not be melted to Powder. But the Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge of him who Inspired this, appears from late Experiments, whereby it is shown, that tho' Gold by itself be Incombustible, yet it may be stamp'd to dust by the addition of other Metals, such as Glass, as *Chymists* found out, and likewise that Gold by itself can be vitrified in the Focus of a Burning-Glass. Besides, the Circulation of the Waters by the Vapours ascending and descending in Rains and Mists; the great benefit of the Twilight, by which, thro' the *Refraction* of the Rays of Light, we have some profit by the Sun, when he is got under our Horizon. *Job* says, *Who has known the Place of the Twilight?* which truly is Impossible to be reduced to *Theory*; for 'tis different in every Clime. The same also tells us, *The Earth hangs on Nothing*; Now the Antients knew not that the Earth was a Globe; now the Center of a Globe or Sphere is a *Mathematical Point*, so true is it that *the Earth hangs upon nothing*; and to add no more, let us consider *1 Corinth. cap. xv. 37 v.* How strangely does the Apostle hit on the very Grain, *viz. of Wheat*, which dies in the Ground, to make his Example of the Resurrections apposite; now *Naturalists* found out, that it, of all Seeds rots in
the

the Ground; for all the rest have their *Stamina*; their first and root Branches, which gradually expand themselves: All these shew, the *Penmen* were inspired by *Him* who perfectly understood Nature, and therefore the *Scriptures* are by *Divine Inspiration*.

As to *Moral Truths* contain'd in the *Scripture*, they are so worthy of God and perfective of our Natures, that no other System of Morality can be parallell'd to it. *Plato* allows of a *Community of Wives*; *Cicero* & *Cato* place *Revenge* amongst the *Virtues*; *Rapine*, *War* and *Blood-shed* are allowed by others, when they are done to advance the *Glory* and extend the *Limits* of *One's Country*; But no *Vice* is tolerated in *Holy Writ*; nay, 'tis forbidden in they very *Thoughts* and *Desires*: If *Honesty* be the best *Policy*, sure we have here a *Scheme of Politics* infinitely preferable to that of *Machiavel*. In what a glorious and peaceable a *Condition* should *Men* be, if the *Moral Precepts* of the *Gospel* were obeyed? Then might *Swords* be turned into *Pruning-hooks*: What noble *Comments* on the *Law of Nature* have we in that *Elegant Sermon* of our *Saviour* on the *Mount*! Now the *Excellency* of these *Precepts*, beyond these of any *Moral Writer*, shews the whole to be more than *Human*, and that those who transmitted them were good honest *Men Inspired*; Not wicked *Angels*, or *Men* for a *Kingdom* divided against it self, which cannot stand; This plainly would be against the *Interest* of the

Kingdom of Darkneſs. The Scriptures then are the Word of God.

The *Mysterious Truths* tend to the ſame Point; I ſhall ſpeak to three of them: *Original Sin*, the *Incarnation of our Saviour*, and the *Doctrine of the Trinity*. The *First* is *Original Sin*: If Man had not been corrupted, he had enjoy'd Truth and Happineſs without Interruption; and if Man had never been but corrupted, he could have had no Idea either of Truth or Happineſs; but poor miſerable Creatures, tho' we have no real Grandeur in our preſent Circumſtances, we have the Idea thereof, and can't attain it; We perceive a Reſemblance of Truth, and poſſeſs a Dream; Not Ignorant altogether, and not able to know with abſolute Certainty.

So manifeſt it is, that we have been in a degree of Perfection, whence we are unhappily, naturally, we know not, how, Fall'n: It is ſtrange that what is fartheſt Remote from our Knowledge, the Transgreſſion of *Original Sin*, ſhou'd be an Affair without which we can have no knowledge of our Selves; Nothing more ſhocks the Reason of Man, than that the ſin of the *first Man* has rendr'd guilty thoſe, who, as being ſo far remov'd from him, ſhould appear incapable to partake of it. This Imputation ſeems not only Impoſſible, but Unjuſt; for what is more contrary to the Rules of our inferior Juſtice, than to Damn eternally an Infant capable of Will, for a Sin in which he was not concerned,

concerned, and committed Six thousand years before his Birth. Nothing certainly stuns the Mind more than this Doctrine; yet without this *Mystery*, the most incomprehensible of any, we are Incomprehensible to our Selves. The Knot of our Condition takes its Mazes and Windings in this Abyss; so that Man is more Inconceivable without this *Mystery*, than this *Mystery* is Inconceivable to him.

Some *Philosophers* considered *Nature* as altogether Incorrupted, others as Irreparable, so they could not evite either *Pride* or *Abjection* of Spirit, the Sources of all Vice: If they shun'd *Vanity*, it was by falling into *Dispair*. But the *Gospel* teaches us how we may be exalted into a Participation of the *Divine Nature*; that in this high Station, notwithstanding we carry with us the Source of all Corruption, which subjects us all our Life to *Error*, *Misery*, *Death* and *Sin*, and at the same time it teaches the Wicked, that they are in a Capacity to receive the *Grace of God* their Redeemer: It administers then cause of Trembling to those whom it justifies, and some Comfort to those whom it condemns: It tempers with so much Justice, Fear and Hope, by that double Capacity, which is common to all, of *Grace* and *Sin*, that it Debases infinitely more than Reason alone could, but without causing *Dispair*; and it exalts much higher than the *Pride* of *Nature*, but without *Puffing up*, thereby demonstrating, that, seeing it alone is free of *Error* and *Vice*, to

it alone belongs the particular Privilege to instruct and correct Mankind.

These Sentiments than prescribed by *Philosophers* are not proper to the Circumstances of Man; They inspire him with the Sentiments of *Grandeur* alone, but this is not his Lot; on t^other hand, they throw him into an *Abjection* of Mind; this is as little his Lot. He must have lowly abject Sentiments, yet not these of *Nature*, but of *Penitence*; not there to remain, but to advance to *Grandeur*, which arises from *Grace*, and not from *Merit*, after having passed thro' *Lowliness*. Now that we may become Intelligible to our selves, we must give assent to the account we have in *Genesis* of Man's *Creation*; the State of *Innocency*, his *Fall*, and *Remedy* prescribed. *Therefore the Scriptures*, in which these are Revealed, *are the Word of God*.

Again, What is a greater Mystery than the *Incarnation of our Saviour*; yet natural Light seems to intimate that no *finite* Creature could have satisfy'd offended Justice, being *Divine*, requiring the same Nature to make Satisfaction of an *Infinite* worth. This Infinite wisdom found out, ev'n that whereby Man might be reconciled, by uniting the two Extreams of Infinite distance, God and Man in one Person. That the Son of God became the Son of Man, that so we might be made the Sons of God. That Eternity began to be, that Light was eclipsed, Life died, Immensity was huddled up in Swadling cloaths and laid in a Manger, that by his Life and Death
satisfied

satisfy'd Justice, and obtain'd Pardon to all who should believe on him; tho' this our reason cannot comprehend, yet not contrary to it. *Therefore the Scripture is of Divine Original.*

Lastly, That Incomprehensible Mystery of the *Trinity*, far Transcending Humane Understanding. The Bishop of *Mentz* has a subtil thought, how just I shall not say, "That as Man was made after the Image of God, so he resembles the Deity with respect to the Trinity. The Soul or Subject of Thought, the Soul understanding, and the Soul willing or active." Whatever is in this, it is no ways contrary to Reason (seeing in our way of thinking the Person offended, satisfying, and applying must be different) to think God the Father should beget, unbegotten; the Son begot and incarnate; the Spirit proceeding and applying. Further, that this Mystery and others should be unintelligible is not contradictory to Reason, seeing God can certainly reveal *many* things which we can't fathom, especially if they relate to his own Nature; for by Searching we cannot find out the *Almighty*; and truly these argue them to be from *GOD*; that as he who runs may understand the plain duties, so the most penetrating may find something to whet his Spirit, to excite his Industry and Application; for such is the Inquisitive Temper of Man, that clear things are neglected, while Obscure matters *not* comprehended; are always supposed to have Excellency in them; for the force of Novelty, hurries us to new Acquisitions,

Acquisitions, This then has a Tendency to prove the *Scripture's Divine Origin*.

In a Word, we shall consider the *Life, Death, and Resurrection* of our *Saviour*. How pleasing is the Contemplation of the Lowly, yet Majestic Steps our *Almighty Leader* took in conducting us to his Heavenly Mansions; in plain and apt *Parables, Similitudes and Allegories* our great Master enforced the Doctrine of our Salvation; when they of his Acquaintance instead of receiving it, were offended, not raising their mean groveling Ideas above any Prejudice they might take at Him, as not appearing more Terrible and Pompous: yet we find how He made his Words powerful, Multitudes following Him, curing those that were blind, sick or maim'd; He had compassion on them, supply'd their wants even by Miracles; they were made to behold their Food immediately increase under the distributors hand, and see their God in Person feeding and refreshing his Creatures; Oh! Envy'd Happiness; But why should I say Envy'd, as if our God did not still preside over our temperate Meals, chearful Hours, and innocent Conversations.

When the great change of Affairs began to draw nigh, the Lord of Nature, as a *Saviour and Deliverer*, Now made his Publick Appearance at *Jerusalem*, with more than the Power and Joy, but none of the Ostentation and Pomp of a Triumph; Humbly and Meekly he went,
Multitudes

Multitudes strewing their Garments along and cutting down Olive Branches, accompanying him with loud Acclamations and Hosannas to the Son of David: Men were not made nable, but sav'd; Crimes were not remitted, but Sins forgiven. He did not bestow Medals, Honours and Favours, but Health, Joy, Sight and Peace: the first Object the Blind ever saw, was the Author of Sight, whil'st the Lame, whom he had cured, run before, joyning their Chorus to him who was blessed in the Name of the Lord; thus attended he entered into his own House, the Sacred Temple, and by his Divine Authority, expell'd Traders and other Worldlings, that Profan'd it, they afterwards conspired against him, of which he fore-warns his Disciples, telling them of their forsaking him and Peter's denial; this as also all his Disciples forsaking him was then verified.

But what Heart can conceive, what Tongue can utter the Sequel? How this our Saviour was Buffeted, Mock'd and Spurn'd? dragging him as a Felen, who is our Lord, King, Saviour & God: and will he die to expiate thote very Injuries? He who was Nail'd, tho' Lord and giver of all things; yet he, when his Wounds were ready to blacken, with Pity and Agony does his Heart move, Oh! Almighty Sufferer, look down even from thy Triumphant Infamy! At his groaning and expiring, the Earth trembles, the Temple rends, Rocks burst, the Dead arise. Where are the Quick? Where are the Dead? sure Nature, all Nature is departing with her Creator.

But

But *Death* was not able to detain him beyond the limited time, He arose, and so declared himself to be the *Son of God* with Power, seen by many, by Hundreds at a time; ascended and sent the *Comforter* as he had promised; consequent to this were Miracles perform'd by his Apostles and other Believers: These could not be deny'd by those who could have done it with Impunity, was there any Ground for it, but to be sufficiently rewarded for their good Service: In lieu of all, a sham Story is trump'd up, which confuted itself; That whilst the Guards slept, his *Disciples* came and stole away his Body. A poor shift against the Truth. Is not there something beyond Humane in the *Life, Death and Resurrection* of *This* our *Saviour*; sure he was the *Son of God*, and consequently *That the Scriptures are of Divine Original*.

But then, *Lastly*, the *Loftiness* of the *Style*, the *Scope* of the whole, and the *Harmony* of all the parts tend to prove the same Point. *Celsus*, one of the bitterest Enemies that ever *Christianity* had, commends *Paul* of *Tarsus* as a great Master of Eloquence: What sublime Strains do we find in *Job, Isaiah* and the *Psalms* of *David*? With what a lively Ease and Perspicuity does our Saviour speak of the weightiest Subjects? And in this consists the Natural and Beautiful Sublime, according to *Longinus*, and the Arch-Bishop of *Cambray*: *Prophecies* then accomplished are permanent standing Miracles; and these are

the Accomplishment of Prophecies : All the *Sacrifices, Types and Ceremonies* were shadows of good things to come under the Gospel Dispensation. *Love and Charity* is the great Design of the Law, Prophets and Gospel ; this is the Spirit that breathes in them ; the Scope to give all Glory to God, and promote the Happiness of Mankind. This is the subject of the Scripture in *Miniature*, which is diversify'd under many Circumstances, and set in various parts of Light. They are then One entire Piece, a bold regular Uniformity in all its Parts. (a)

Now all these obtaining in Scripture, are a further Confirmation of their *Divine Authority*. To sum up our Evidence, and to perswade Men to believe the Scriptures, I offer this Consideration. If there be a God, by whose Providence the World & all Creatures therein are govern'd, is it not reasonable to think, that he hath a particular care of Men, the Noblest part of this visible World ? And seeing he hath made him capable of Eternal Duration, He has provided for their Eternal Happiness, and sufficiently

(a) In Wit, as Nature, what affects our Hearts,

Is not th^e *Exactness* of peculiar Parts :

'Tis not a Lip or Eye we Beauty call,

But the joynt Force and full Result of all.

This is what Mr. Pope says, is the utmost that can be required in any Epic Poem or Dramatic Performance.

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revealed

revealed to them the Way to it, and the Terms and Conditions of it.

Now, let any Man in the world produce a *Book* that pretends to be from God, and to do this, that for the Matter of it, is so *Worthy* of God, the Doctrines whereof are so useful and the Precepts so reasonable, and the Arguments so powerful, the Truth of all which was confirmed by so many *great* and *unquestionable Miracles*; the Relation of which has been transmitted to Posterity in *Public* and *Authentic Records*, written by those who were *Eye* and *Ear Witnesses* of what they deliver, and free from any *Suspicion* of any Interest or Worldly design. Let a *Book* like this be produc'd, in all these respects, and which, besides, hath, by the Power and Reasonableness of the Doctrines contain'd in it, prevail'd so miraculously in the World, by weak and inconsiderable Means, in Opposition to all the Wit and Power of the World, and under such Discouragements as no other Religion was ever assaulted with. Any who can bring forth a *Book* with these Qualifications, shall have my leave to believe it, as soon as the *Bible*: But if there be none, as I'm well assur'd there is not, then every one who thinks God hath revealed himself to Men, ought to embrace and entertain the Doctrine of the *Holy Scriptures*, as reveal'd by God.

We come to answer one great Objection against the Divinity of the Scriptures, which is this,

That

That the Laws of Religion, and especially these of the Christian, are an heavy Yoke, and lay too great a Restraint upon Humane Nature, and entrench too much on the Pleasures and Liberties of it.

It must be own'd, that Pleasure or Happiness is the end that Man naturally proposes to himself in all his Actions, even in the most painful; but then 'tis a rational, not an irregular Pleasure we should propose. If we believe *Epicurus* himself, there can be no true Pleasure but where there is *Temperance* in the use of it. Now God and Reason have set no other bounds to sensual Pleasure, but that thereby we be not Injurious to our selves and others, in the degree of them; and it is very visible, that all sensual Excess is attended, naturally, with a double Inconvenience, as it goes beyond the limits of Nature; it begets bodily Pains and Diseases; as it transgresseth the rules of Reason and Religion, it breeds Guilt and Remorse in the mind, and they are beyond comparison the two greatest Evils in the World, a diseased Body and discontented Mind; this is clear to every one, and what every Vicious Man finds, and hath a more lively sense of than can be express'd in words. And then, as to the other part of the Objection, that Religion not only entrenches our Pleasures, but restrains our Liberty; the contrary is evidently true, that Sin and Vice are the greatest Slavery;

For he is truly such, who is not at Liberty to follow his own Judgment, and to do those things which he is inwardly convinc'd is best for him to do; but is subject to the *Irregular Commands* and *Tyrannical Power* of his own Lusts and Passions; the Man is at perpetual variance with his own Mind, and continually committing the things which he condemns in himself; and 'tis all one whether a man be subject to the Will and Humor of another Person, or to his own Lusts and Passions; only of the two, this is the worst, because the Tyrant is always at home.

But on the other hand, did we accustom ourselves to the ways of *Religion* and *Virtue*, we would find an exquisite and delicious Pleasure, which the Ways of *Sin* and *Vice* can never afford; where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is perfect Liberty: *Wisdom's Ways are Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace; Christ's Yoke is easie, and his Burthen is light.* A wise man then will willingly sacrifice the debasing Pleasures of *Sin* and *Time* to those of *Eternity*, and will prefer such as lead to Happiness, to those gross and transitory Pleasures, which will end in *Everlasting Misery*; for altho' our Happiness in the next Life shall consist in the gratification of our Desires; in this it arises from the suppression of them.

But to put this beyond all dispute, let us consider the Pursuits of the vicious part of Mankind in the Road of *Avarice*, *Ambition*, in Scripture words, these of the *Eye*, *Flesh* and *Side of Life*, and compare them with the Paths

of

of Religion and Virtue; he shall see which of these Ways engage Man in a course of the greatest Labour: These being made appear, some may, perhaps, be perswaded to be good, when they find they shall be no Loosers by it.

First, then for *Avarice*; The Miser is at more pains than the Saint; the Pains of getting, the Fears of loosing, and the Inability of enjoying his Wealth, makes it the most unaccountable Labour and Fatigue; the same may be said of the *Ambitious* Man.

How wretched is the Condition of that Man, who lies under the displeasure of Him, who in all Places and all Times is intimately acquainted with all he do's, who can disturb the Soul in all its Faculties; can hinder any of the Comforts of Life from refreshing us, and give an edge to every one of our strongest Calamities; so that it is impossible for the Imagination to conceive the fearful Effects of Omnipotence incensed.

The Sum of this is, Man is made an active Being, whether he walks in the Paths of Virtue or Vice, he is sure to meet with many Difficulties to prove his Patience and excite his Industry; the same, yea, greater Labour is required in the Service of *Vice* and *Folly*; the Choice is left, whether Happiness or Repentance is to be purchased; whether he shall work out his *Condemnation* with Fear and Trembling; take the Advice of the Apostle Thus working out your own *Salvation*. Since then *Pleasure* and
Liberty

Liberty is infinitely on the side of *Religion & Virtue*, and the greatest *Toil* on that of *Vice*, I hope the *Nullity* of the *Objection* is fully demonstrated.

To put a Period to this Discourse, it remains that I draw an Inference from the whole,

SINCE, I hope, I have made it appear, from the irrefragable Arguments, the *Being and Attributes* of God, the *Immortality* of the Soul; a *Future State of Rewards & Punishments*; by the *Characters* of the *Pen-men*; by *Prophecies & Miracles*; by *Natural, Moral & Mysterious Truths* contain'd in the *Scriptures*; by the *Life, Death & Resurrection* of our *Saviour*; by the *Absence* of all *Imaginable Marks of Imposture*; and in fine, the *Style, Scope and Harmony* of the whole; the concurring *Evidence* of all these by the *Pleasures* of a *Religious*, & *Miseries* of a *Wicked Life*; since, I say, it has been prov'd from all these, that the *Scriptures* are the *Word of God*: How much does it concern us to ground our selves in the *Persuasion*, that they are the *Oracles* of the *Living God*, the perfect *Rule of Faith and Life*. Here we must lay aside all *Prejudice*, and consider what truly is, and not what our *Lusts & Passions* would make us wish should be; For the *Scriptures* are the *Word of God*, or not, antecedently to our thinking them to be so; and he, who, after the *Evidences* given, will deny the *Divine Original* of them, must do it with his *Will*, and not *Understanding*. I am sensible that after the firmest *Historical Faith*, the *Blessing* of God is requisite to make them effectual to our *Salvation*, thro' the *Faith* that is in *Jesus Christ*,

Christ, which is the Gift of God; yet I believe that, if one is firmly and honestly perswaded of their *Divine Original*, and earnestly asks God's Blessing to make them effectual for his Happiness, that of his *infinite* goodness he will grant it. This Historical Faith then is most necessary; *For Faith comes by Hearing, and that by the Word of God.* To hear this Word aright, one must be perswaded of this *Revelation*; and a *Christian* ought to be ready to give an account of the Faith which is in him; this must be look'd on then as the best means conducive to that end.

To Conclude. If the *Scriptures* are the *Word of God*, hence we may infer, that in our *Principles, Dispositions* and *Practices*, we ought to be conform'd to the Will of the Supreme Being reveal'd in them; conforming our selves to the Principle of the *Primitive Christians*, too much indisuetude in our Days; They for Proof of their Doctrine *appealed to their Lives and Conversations.* What a despicable Figure do's one make, who pretends to be skill'd in the Laws of his County, when ignorant of the Laws of *Nature*, and the *Roman Civil Law*, on which all Municipal Laws are founded; or he who professes *Physic*, and is ignorant of the Contexture of the Human Body; Such another contemptible Appearance do's He, in all reason, make, who pretends to believe the *Scriptures*, and to be a *Christian*, and at the same time lead a *Dissolute Life.* May we then study the *Bible* with that close Application and Reverence which is due to the *Oracles* of the *Living God*;

God: It must be the *Guide of Youth*, and *Companion of Age*: This is that which will preserve us from mis-apprehended *Notions of Gods Will* and our *Duty*, and from *Immorality*, as the worst of *Heresse*. There are several Failings in the best of Men; and without a *Redeemer* their hearts might shrink within them, at the apprehensions of appearing naked in the Presence of God, to have all their Actions canvas'd with the strictest Scrutiny and Impartiality. But, blessed be God, that *if we sin, we have advocate with the Father*; but this is *Not that sin may abound, God forbid*: Our Faith must purifie our Hearts and Lives; and Virtue, with good Works, must shew that our Faith is alive; that thus our *Principles and Practices* may be of a piece, may mutually support and embellish each other, by which we, at the same time, we shall demonstrate, That we firmly believe the *Scriptures* to be given by the *Inspiration of God*, able to perfect us in every good Work. *And to this End blefs them to us, thro' Jesus Christ, To Whom, with Thee, O Holy Father, and Blessed Spirit, we ascribe all Honour, Praise and Dominion, now and for evermore, Amen.*

F I N I S.